

Ejecta - Chapter One

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Summary: Gunnery Sargent Robert Farmahini is career military with a clear path through the ranks, but will his next assignment be another leg-up in the military ladder, or the ruin of everything he's fought for? A/N: 'Ejecta' is a term from volcanology to define material thrown from an eruption or impact crater. Here, it is the name of a squad of ODS. I hope you find it as fitting as I do

Ejecta - Chapter One

You don't get this high up just by following orders.

You have to give good orders, you have to know when to press in, and when to pull out. You have to instinctively know the tell-tale signs of a shifting battle and be able to accommodate, and be quick enough on your feet that those moments it surprises you, you surprise it back in turn. You have to account for every man, to not waste life needlessly and to go back and rescue those that you can.

Gunnery Sargent Robert Farmahini was all of these. He was career military, following in the footsteps of a family committed to the UNSC. His ancestors were fighters, a lineage he could trace all the way back to Civil War era America. Battle ran in his blood, and strategy was his gifted tongue.

This, as well as years of faithful and successful service, were the reasons why he was where he was now; standing at parade rest in the antechamber of Admiral Hood's office. He'd been called off leave unexpectedly, though not regretfully; he always felt more comfortable on the battlefield than the city streets of New Alexandria.

Farmahini had been waiting in quiet patience for some time, and would have continued to do so without complaint, but eventually Hood's personal AI flared on with a glow of amber leaves, a woman in the likeness of one of Mucha's muses; draping fabrics and long, curving lines.

"Admiral Hood will see you now, Gunnery Sargent."

Farmahini gave her a nod and stepped into the office proper. The AI faded from the antechamber's projector and appeared shortly hovering over Hood's desk. While she was inherently everywhere at once, such tactics - an observance to not project in more than two places within eyesight at the same time - was simply a response to human sensitivities.

Hood was standing behind his desk, bent over the surface as he finished a communication with someone on a VidComm Farmahini couldn't see. Once the other party had said their goodbyes and the commlink closed, Hood straightened and looked over Farmahini, smiling softly.

"At ease, soldier." He motioned to one of the plush leather chairs that faced the broad, mahogany desk. "Take a seat. Would you like something to drink?"

"Coffee, black, I'd appreciate it, Sir." Farmahini took his seat as Hood tended to the drink replicator. He'd been curious about the summons, and even more so to see Hood was in a rare good mood. The Covenant continued to glass and kill and terrorize, more news arriving everyday and none of it good, and Farmahini usually smack in the center of it.

Admiral Hood smiling was a good omen indeed, Farmahini thought, as the older man finally turned and handed him a steaming mug of something that smelled worlds away better than the black sludge he was used to drinking.

"I put a nip of brandy in it, hope you don't mind." Hood said, taking his seat behind the desk and leaning back. "I have a feeling you're going to need it."

Farmahini took a careful sip, the brandy playing gentle notes against the dark roast and the two together warming his throat as it went down. It was winter in New Alexandria, currently, and he'd come from the beginnings of the first snowfall. He nodded, offering no complaint.

"I've just been over your record with Vice Admiral Parangosky." Hood started, "Very impressive."

Farmahini nodded again, a small, respectful motion. "Thank you, sir."

"I should be thanking you. You and your squad are a blessing to the UNSC. As such, I'd like to offer you a special assignment. It's not your usual engagement, but you'll have troops and additional ODST squads at your disposal. Promotion and paygrade increase as well, I might add."

"What sort of assignment?"

"I'm afraid I cannot offer you any details unless you say 'yes', and sign some documents accordingly. This is rather highly classified, I trust you understand."

Another nod from the ODST. He had only to think it over for a moment; any advancement in his career was hard fought for, and the fact that he was here, now, being offered special ops from Admiral Hood himself, gave him a flare of pride.

"I would be honored to serve the UNSC in such a manner, Sir."

Hood smiled broadly and stood. "Fantastic! I'll send along the good news, and you'll be receiving your intel packet within forty-eight hours." He walked around the desk as Farmahini stood and nodded in acknowledgement, shaking Hood's hand when it was offered.

"I look forward to it." He replied in plain honesty, letting a careful amount of pride slip into his otherwise carefully schooled expression. He was fairly even-keeled for an ODST, a trait he himself continued to cultivate given the volatile nature of his squadmates.

Hood ushered him back into the antechamber, pulling the conversation into more innocuous topics, like the weather, as well as an order to enjoy the rest of his leave - what little remained, given the new assignments. Farmahini promised he would, bid his farewells, and headed off to take the next shuttle back to the planet.

As he stared out the viewport, watching the dark night bleed into blue atmosphere, which became a bright midday intensified by snow-laden clouds, he gave serious thought over to his squad; who he could trust, who he might have to be careful with, and who he should suggest be replaced. Not everyone was as discerning and tight-lipped as he was, and he understood that secrecy was tantamount.

None of his squad even knew he was meeting with Hood today. Not all of them would ever know. As he continued to watch the shuttle's approach to the spaceport, he mentally started to build a roster of his best, brightest, and most trusted.

End
file.